

GOVERNMENT/INDUSTRY AERONAUTICAL CHARTING FORUM
Instrument Procedures Group
(Transcribed/Re-Formatted)
HISTORY RECORD

FAA Control # 98-01-196

SUBJECT: Effect of Loss of AWOS Altimeter

BACKGROUND/DISCUSSION: AWOS airports do not have part-time remote altimeter settings because the FAA presumes that the AWOS altimeter setting will always be available. Recently, the AWOS altimeter failed at Greeley (KGXY), Colorado. The minimal required obstacle clearance in non-precision final approach segments is inadequate to protect for errors resulting from pilot improvisation of altimeter settings. Some pilots feel that FAR 91.121 permits the use of any altimeter setting within 100 miles if the local altimeter is not available and no remote altimeter source is prescribed on the approach chart.

RECOMMENDATION: AWOS approach charts that do not have an alternative remote altimeter source should be annotated, "procedure not authorized if AWOS altimeter not received."

COMMENT: This proposal affects FAA Handbook 8260.19C and various FAA internal directives.

Submitted by: Captain Tom Young, Chairman
Charting and Instrument Procedures Committee
AIR LINE PILOTS ASSOCIATION

INITIAL DISCUSSION (MEETING 98-01): Tom Young, ALPA expressed ALPA's concern that AWOS airports do not have part-time remote altimeter settings. He stated that in the case of Greeley, CO, where the AWOS altimeter failed, pilots believing that FAR 91.121 permits the use of any altimeter setting within 100 miles is an unsafe situation. ALPA recommends AWOS approach charts that do not have an alternative remote altimeter source should be annotated "procedure not authorized if AWOS altimeter not received". AFS-420 and ATA-110 took an IOU to review ALPA's comments and report at next meeting. **Action:** Item Open (AFS-420 and ATA-110)

MEETING 98-02: Paul Best, AFS-400, briefed on this issue. He noted that AWOS is acceptable as a full time altimeter source just the same as an ATC facility; therefore alternate procedures are not necessary. In the rare cases where AWOS fails, air traffic cannot issue an approach clearance without an altimeter setting. Questions arose as to the reliability rate for AWOS/ASOS and it was recommended that this data be evaluated prior to making any changes. Wally

Roberts, ALPA, briefed an instance in Colorado where the AWOS failed and controllers were issuing other altimeter settings from other sources when there was no altimeter source noted on the approach charts. The group noted that this was a controller education issue, not a criteria issue. The group discussion noted that there is no CFR requirements for a pilot to have an altimeter setting prior to conducting an approach even though TERPS criteria requires an altimeter source for IAP development. Tom Young, ALPA, believes that a pilot requirement for an altimeter setting should be addressed in the AIM: pending legal interpretation. AFS-420 took an IOU to research this issue and develop AIM guidance (with ALPA and AOPA input). AFS-420 will also coordinate with AAF to ascertain AWOS/ASOS reliability rates and develop AIM guidance. **Action:** Item Open (AFS-420).

MEETING 99-01: Bill Hammett, AFS-420, briefed that the guidance in Order 8260.19 is sufficient for all AWOS/ASOS equipment scenarios. It was also briefed that, although there is no mandatory rule for a pilot to have the altimeter prior to commencing an approach, there are sufficient controller rules to ensure that he/she is provided one by ATC. It was suggested that the AIM provide better pilot guidance for altimeter source for IFR approaches. ALPA and AOPA agreed to provide input to Steve Jackson, AFS-420, for the AIM revision. The situation that prompted ALPA to bring the issue before the ACF was caused by ATC (a controller, in trying to be helpful, issued an altimeter from a source that did not support the procedure). Bill recommended that ATO-120 make this a mandatory briefing item in the quarterly AT Bulletin for all terminal and en route controllers. Bill Mosley, ATO-120 agreed. AFS-420 will work AIM change (with ALPA and AOPA input). ATO-120 will address altimeter source for approaches in the AT Bulletin. **Action:** Item Open (AFS-420 & ATO-120)

MEETING 99-02: Bill Hammett, AFS-420, presented a status update paper on the issue. Subsequent to the last meeting, AFS-400 forwarded a memorandum to ATO-100 reaffirming the importance of using the correct altimeter settings in conjunction with approach clearances. This memorandum was to provide the basis for ATP-120 to address the issue as a controller training item in the Air Traffic Bulletin. Although an ATP-120 representative was not available, Dave Eckles, AFS-420, reported that the issue is being actively worked by Air Traffic. He has received a draft of the AT Bulletin article for review and it incorporates the AFS guidance. AFS-420 has also prepared an AIM change which will be published in the next available issue (August 2000). Bill recommended that, based on these initiatives, the issue be closed. The group agreed. **Status:** Item Closed.